

Appendix A



Flexible Polyurethane Foams

Editors

Ron Herrington
Kathy Hock

Contributing Authors

Randy Autenrieth
Janan Beckerdite
Paul Berthevas
Mike Brown
Steve Burks
Francois Casati
Ricardo De Genova
Bill Farrissey
Jerry Fosnaugh
Ron Herrington
Jackie Hicks
Ken Hinze

Kathy Hock
Dale Hunter
Linda Jeng
David Laycock
Werner Lidy
Fred Martinez, III
Henri Mispreuve
Roger Moore
Roy Morgan
Lowell Nafziger
Chris Noakes
Mike Norton
Don Parrish

Freddie Polk
Jim Porter
Ralph Priester
Larry Shaw
Ken Skaggs
Laurence Stahler
Forest Sweet
Ray Thomas
Jean-Paul Treboux
Bob Turner
Gene Wiltz, Jr.
Tom Woods



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Appendix A

Since nucleating aids are not universally successful, some authors, notably Baumhakel, argue that the gases involved in nucleation come solely from gas loading of the initial reaction components.^{3.7} Such loading will include gas from:

- Dissolved gas loading of the polyol and isocyanate during storage,
- Entrainment of bubbles during the liquids handling and mixing process (work provided by mechanical energy input).

Dissolved gases are defined as those gas molecules present as a 'solute' phase in a polyol, isocyanate or other liquid formulation ingredients. The maximum amount of a given gas that a liquid will absorb at standard conditions (1 atmosphere and 25°C) is termed the Bunsen Coefficient.^{3.8} Most polyether polyols exhibit a Bunsen Coefficient in the range of 6-10 volume percent.^{3.9}

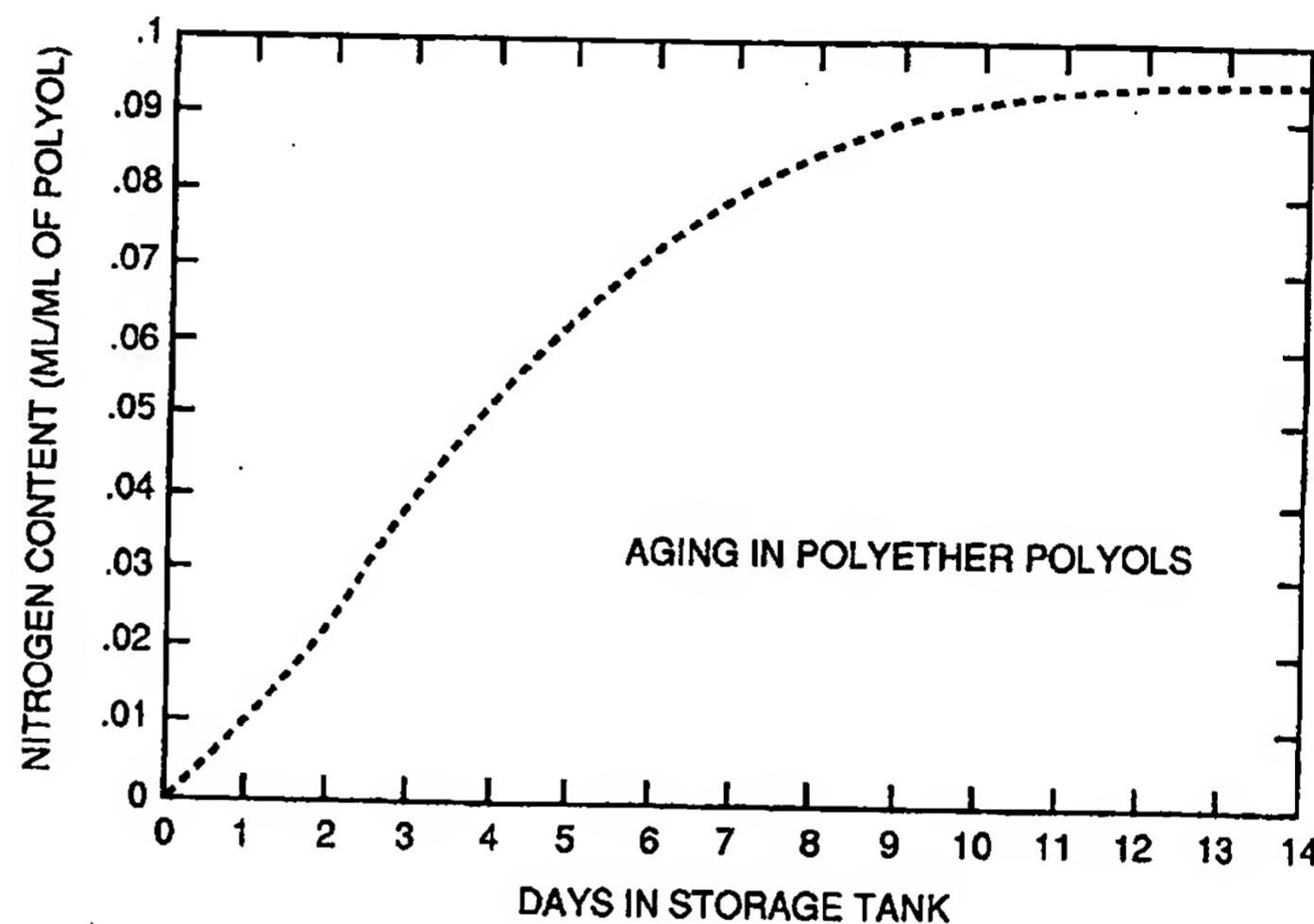


Figure 3.6 Gas Content of Polyol Varies with Storage History

Figure 3.6 illustrates that the actual degree of loading of dissolved gas such as nitrogen into a polyol (or isocyanate) is a significant variable related to storage history. Without allowing sufficient time for freshly produced raw materials to absorb a loading of nitrogen, foam cell-size and stability problems are known to result.^{3.10} The amount of dissolved gas in an isocyanate is reported to vary widely and to be a function of pad gas pressure.^{3.11-3.12} Excessive amounts of dissolved gas in the isocyanate are reported to lead to foam collapse.^{3.13-3.14}

Problems have also been encountered when excessive amounts of entrained gas are allowed to form in viscous component streams. Entrained gas can be helpful in proper nucleation of a foam mixture. The amount of entrained gas that can be tolerated depends on the formulation, the metering system, the mixer geometry and the desired final foam cell-structure. If the amount of gas becomes excessive; metering problems can result, pea holes can form, density can vary and in severe cases, total collapse of the foam may occur.^{3.15-3.16}